

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Amongst claims 1-11 considered in the Office Action mailed on January 30, 2004, claims 1, 2, 5 and 8 were rejected and claims 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9-11 were objected to. In response, claims 1 and 8 have been canceled, and claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 have been amended. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and of receipt of all the certified copies of the priority documents.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3-4, 6-7 and 9-11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner has indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claims 3, 6, 7 and 9 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 3, 6, 7 and 9, as well as claim 4 which depends on claim 3, and claims 10-11 which depend on claim 9, are in allowable condition.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,181,940 ("Underwood et al."). Applicants note that claims 1 and 8 have been canceled, and that claims 2 and 5 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 3. Accordingly, Applicants note that pending claims 2 and 5 are in allowable condition.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

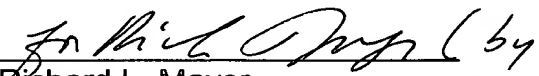
Please charge \$86 fee (for one extra independent claim in excess of three) to Kenyon & Kenyon's Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 1, 2004

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